

Thursday, April 19, 1990

Local PTA sponsors TV-free week

By BILL HETHCOCK
Of The Battalion Staff

Students and teachers in Bryan's Crockett Elementary School are going to spend a week without what often is considered a necessity in today's world—the television set.

The Crockett Parent-Teacher Association is sponsoring a program to encourage students and their families not to watch TV for one full week. The program, called "TV Turnoff Week," will start Friday.

The purpose is to show people involved in the program the role television plays in their lives, Nancy Simpson, a PTA TV turnoff committee member, said.

Simpson said the idea for the week without TV came from a book she read by Marie Winn titled "Unplugging the Plug-In Drug."

Simpson presented the idea for the week-long turnoff to the PTA and to Crockett principal Ernest Johnson.

Johnson liked the idea and decided to give it a try at the elementary school.

Johnson said he hopes all 650 students at Crockett will give up television or at least cut back on the amount they watch during TV Turnoff Week.

"The idea is to have fun with it," Johnson said. "There is no penalty for watching TV this week. We're just trying to discourage it and emphasize

the fact that watching television is a choice we make.

"Every time you turn on the TV, you are choosing not to do something else."

Simpson said she does not expect drastic long-term changes in students' viewing habits.

She said, however, that hopefully the week will force people to consider how much time they spend watching television and evaluate what they watch more carefully.

"It's hard to predict whether this week will

"Every time you turn on the TV, you are choosing not to do something else."

— Ernest Johnson,
school principal

Community organizations and businesses have provided activities for students who sign a contract saying they will not watch television this week.

The Bryan Public Library, Brazos Valley Museum, Bryan Parks and Recreation, Texas A&M Athletic Department, local bowling alleys and Putt Putt Golf are giving Crockett students special discounts or activities to fill their spare time.

Jenny Hobson, a fourth grade student, said she doesn't think giving up television for a week will be a problem. She plans to entertain herself by reading books.

Monica Thomas, one of Hobson's classmates, said she might have a hard time making it through the week because she'll miss her favorite TV shows.

Thomas said she enjoys "The Cosby Show," but plans to skip it this week because of the project.

Fourth-grader Travis Whipkey said he is going to cut his TV viewing down and only watch for 30 minutes on Saturday morning.

Whipkey said the only show he plans to watch this week is his favorite cartoon, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Allen Pride, a Crockett third-grader, said he doesn't expect any problems curtailing his heavy TV viewing for a week.

"I usually watch about four hours of television a day," Pride said. "But it won't be that hard to live without it for a week. I will have to miss my cartoons, but I can think of other things to do."

Hightower converts vehicles to propane

AUSTIN (AP) — Taking the wheel of a propane-powered pickup, Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower said Wednesday his agency will convert several vehicles to propane and urged other Texans to "get tanked up" on the cleaner-burning fuel.

Using readily available liquid propane gas instead of gasoline is cheaper, more efficient and better for the environment, Hightower said. One-third of the nation's propane supply is produced in Texas.

"It's a Texas tried-and-true fuel. A fuel that really looks good for the environment, for the consumers of our state and for the economy in Texas," he said.

As part of the Earth Day environmental awareness efforts, Hightower said his Texas Department of Agriculture will convert 14 trucks to propane and study their use to see how much can be gained by using the alternative fuel.

"Compared to gasoline, propane generates up to 50 percent less harmful hydrocarbons and 70 percent less carbon monoxide — two pollutants that contribute to the Greenhouse effect and jeopardize human health," Hightower said.

Converting the new white TDA pickup truck he drove Wednesday cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500, Hightower said. That includes the costs of fuel lines, carburetor and a large propane tank.

But propane costs less, at 44 cents per gallon, reduces maintenance expenses and provides greater range, he said.

"The investment is repaid by savings on fuel costs and savings on maintenance to the vehicle, as well as extended life of the vehicle. In three years, you've paid off the investment you've made in this new fuel," he said.

Speaker advises women to seek opportunities

By PAM MOOMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Symposium looks at conditions in business world

Change always brings problems, but it brings opportunities as well.

This was the message of Zanna Stepanek, the first speaker in MSC Great Issues Women's Issues Symposium.

Stepanek, director of the Management Information Bureau for the Houston Police Department, talked about ways of handling discrimination in the workplace.

"Thirty years ago, if someone had a symposium for women, I would have attended it," Stepanek said. But 30 years ago there was no such opportunity, she said.

When she took her first job at IBM as a computer programmer, it

was legal to discriminate openly against women, she said. Employers could pay a woman less for the same job as a man, limit promotional opportunities based on sex, and refuse to allow women to use sick leave for pregnancy.

Women were told how to dress and were asked personal questions, including the kind of family planning they were doing, she said.

"The good news is we have come a long way and hopefully will never see anything like this again," she said.

But she said to keep in mind that women only have a few civil rights

rulings to turn to now. An equal rights amendment is the only thing that will give women long-term constitutional protection, she said.

Handling discrimination in the workplace is difficult, but it can be maturely done.

"One of the best ways to handle discrimination in the workplace is to avoid it," Stepanek said.

To do this, a woman needs to research the field or company she is interested in, she said, and look for opportunities.

"Pick a field that's new and growing rapidly," she said. Some examples of these fields today are tele-

communication, genetics and environmental sciences, she said.

Also, a woman needs to keep her options open, Stepanek said. She needs to know the organization she works for and the environment she is working in.

"At some point in your career, it will probably be good for you to move," she said. It is good if moves can be kept within the same company, but if conditions aren't satisfying, don't be afraid to look for the door, she said.

Women can do certain things to invite or deter discrimination, Stepanek said.

First of all, people don't hassle a woman who looks like she can't be hassled, she said. Stand up straight, she said, and because height helps, act tall and eventually everyone will consider you tall.

Another thing a woman can do is lower her voice by talking slowly from the diaphragm, she said.

"Little girl voices don't play well," she said.

Other tips Stepanek had were to dress appropriately and professionally, meaning no high-fashion or sexy dressing at the office. Also, women should be careful to keep

their personal and work lives separate.

But women should not hide behind discrimination to cover up their shortcomings, she said.

"Be honest with yourself," she said.

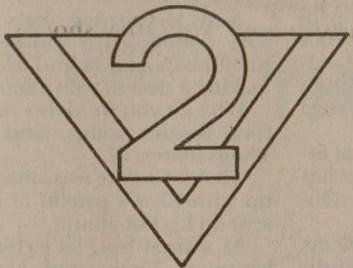
She said not to assume that being passed over for a promotion or getting reprimanded is discrimination.

Stepanek identified certain types of people in the business world that women should be aware of.

Big Brother, or Bubba, considers women capable, but never loses sight of the fact that they are women and wants to protect them, she said.

The Autocrat usually is an older

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2 Day Video

"Where Video Is Fun"



"Two Thumbs Up."

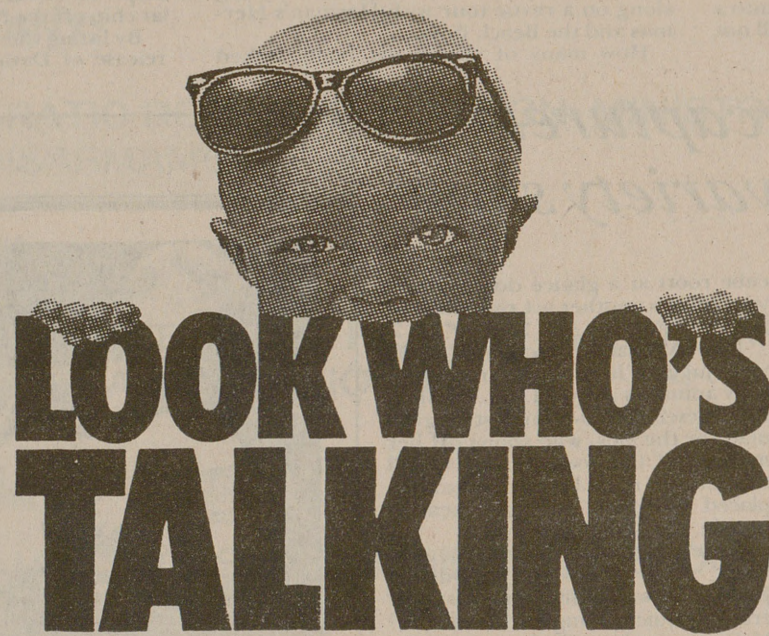
— SISKEL & EBERT

"Totally delightful."

— Dixie Whatley, AT THE MOVIES

"The stork has delivered a bouncing baby hit."

— Joel Siegel, GOOD MORNING AMERICA



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Life from a baby's-eye-view, with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Bruce Willis as the voice of baby Mikey.

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